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ABSTRACT

Two programs at San Diego State University are part of a larger program to train students to become professional bilingual (Spanish-English) teachers. One project provided support to modify five undergraduate courses in math, science, Mexican American culture and history, and child development so they could be taught in Spanish. These courses were chosen specifically to increase teacher trainees' cognitive skills in Spanish, to facilitate teaching in Spanish, and to provide vocabulary and concepts for communicating with parents about their children. The other program provided federal support to guarantee the appropriate number of students for the courses. Negotiation for institutionalization of the five courses has begun. (MSE)

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

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ABSTRACT

The FIPSE and OBEMLA projects described in this report are part of a larger program designed to train students to become professional, bilingual (Spanish/English) teachers. In the past, students entering the program tended to have insufficient Spanish skills to teach elementary school children, especially in academic subjects. The FIPSE project provided support to modify five undergraduate courses (in math, science, Mexican American culture and history, and child development) for presentation in Spanish. Once these students graduated and enrolled in a bilingual credential program, these courses, in conjunction with the OBEMLA program, increased the students capabilities to think and teach in Spanish. These courses are in the process of being negotiated for institutionalization into the university.

INTRODUCTION

The FIPSE and OBEMLA projects described in this report are part of a larger program designed to train students to become professional, bilingual (Spanish/English) teachers. In the past, students entering the program tended to have insufficient subjects. The FIPSE project provided support to modify five undergraduate courses (in math, science, Mexican culture and history, and child development) for presentation in Spanish. These courses increased the students capabilities to think and eventually teach in Spanish, when they occur in conjunction with the rest of the program. The courses are in the process of being institutionalized into the university.

BACKGROUND

The problem addressed by this project was the lower level Spanish skills exhibited by student teachers in the Bilingual Emphasis Teacher Training Program at SDSU. School districts served by SDSU had complained for a number of years that our Spanish-speaking student teachers could not effectively present lessons in anything but the language arts, and even they were sometimes weak.

Analysis of the student teachers' Spanish language skills indicated that they had functional social skills but lacked the necessary vocabulary for any of the academic subjects they would have to teach. Three-fourths of the students were Hispanic and the rest were Anglo-American. Being Hispanic did not necessarily mean that the students came from predominantly Spanish-speaking homes. Further, virtually none of them had come through Title VII bilingual elementary programs; hence, they had never learned any academic vocabulary as children, but may have been socially competent. A number of Hispanics, and all of the Anglos, had learned their Spanish in high

school or in college, and then only for four to six courses in a Spanish department. None of them thought cognitively in Spanish, but rather, thought in English - where all of their training had been - and then attempted to translate those thoughts into Spanish during their student teaching. Needless to say, many of those translations were of very low quality or were not in standard Spanish.

The primary purpose of the FIPSE project was to modify and translate five academic undergraduate courses so that they could be taught in Spanish. These courses were chosen specifically to increase the students cognitive skills in Spanish. The first two, on math and science, made it possible to learn the content and vocabulary prior to learning how to present these areas to children. The second two, in Mexican culture, will enable presentations to enrich the cultural knowledge of the children, as mandated by the federal Title VII Bilingual Act. The final course, on child development, provides the vocabulary and concepts that will be needed when discussing the children with their parents.

None of these courses, or anything like them, are offered by the Spanish Department. The Spanish courses provide basic social vocabulary, grammar and an introduction to literature, but nothing as cognitively broadening as these five new courses.

BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS

As a fifth year, post B.A., program the Credential Program in the College of Education at SDSU had no control over the students' prior academic experiences. The basic California legislative requirement was that the students finish an Applied Arts degree, without any second language requirement. Students interested in becoming bilingual teachers either

opted to take Spanish as an elective, or came with some skills acquired at home.

The Spanish Department at SDSU had the goal of making the students into functional or social speakers, and reasonably literate in the literature of Spain, South America, and Mexico. No other undergraduate courses were taught in Spanish because no need was seen for doing such.

The major organizational change that had to occur, given the identified needs in the student teachers, was for a variety of undergraduate departments to permit modifications of their courses into Spanish. Such changes immediately raised the question of FTEs - would there be enough students to constitute a class (15 or more), who would the faculty be, and how would the faculty be supported while they developed the courses. A Title VII (OBEMLA) grant guaranteed the appropriate number of students. Spanish-speaking faculty were identified, and the FIPSE grant provided the necessary support for the project.

DESCRIPTION

The present SDSU Bilingual Emphasis Program is the culmination of three Title VII Bilingual Education grants, a FIPSE grant, and a major departmental restructuring. The Program has four interactive components that were necessary for the successful training of bilingual student teachers: 1) a teacher aide project, 2) junior and senior level academic courses in Spanish (FIPSE supported), 3) a Summer Language Enrichment Program, and 4) the fifth year student teacher training program.

The teacher aide project places future bilingual teachers in bilingual elementary school classrooms, starting in their junior year. Having had two years of college Spanish, which is not sufficient for much fluency, this

environment permits the students an opportunity to practice and improve their Spanish. They are placed in K-3 classrooms which provides a nonthreatening situation that elicits expressive language, while learning some of the vocabulary needed in classrooms. The assumption behind this approach is that the determiner as to whether teachers can only communicate effectively (through the use of a language), or whether they can also organize the curriculum and transfer their knowledge and literacy values to their students is their ability to understand the sociocultural context of the students' learning environment.

This assumption also carries forward into the development of the five FIPSE courses. By having a Mexican American culture and a Mexican and Mexican American music course taught in Spanish the students experienced the subject areas as the children they will teach have experienced it. They then can teach children their culture and history without engaging in the process of translation.

The math and science courses, in Spanish, placed the students in the children's position -- learning a new topic in the future language of instruction. These courses provided the perfect sociocultural educational context that these teachers would later experience in their own elementary classrooms. Similarly, the child development course provided much of the knowledge about children that the students would later have to utilize in parent conferences.

The end goal of the FIPSE project was to be course manuals for each of the courses. A model was developed, five Spanish-speaking American instructors were found in the various disciplines. They each then developed a rough version of their course. Students from the other projects took the

courses and commented on them. The manuals and courses were modified and the process repeated.

A summer Program brings Mexican teachers on campus every year. They provide further instruction, in Spanish, on how they teach reading, math, science, and culture. The techniques used in Mexican schools differ from those in the U.S., but have been experienced by many of the immigrant children. This again provides a sociocultural context for the students.

The last phase is to provide half of the pedagogical courses, in Spanish, during the student teaching year. Content and pedagogical competence are thus gained by the future teachers.

RESULTS

Student teachers prior to modification of the program generally had Spanish language skills that ranged from 2.0 to 3.0 on a five point Foreign Service Interview (FSI) scale. Below 3.0 they could not be hired as bilingual teachers. The schools also complained that they could not teach many of the subject areas very well in Spanish. The new student teachers range from 3.0 to 4.0+ and the schools rave about their abilities -- 100% of the students are hired, many even before completing the fifth year.

Four of the courses were completed to our satisfaction. Some of the professors are still revising them and want to experiment with them for another year, without grant support. It appears that they may become institutionalized.

Evaluation occurred on a number of levels. First, the students' Spanish skills were tested by an outside evaluator. Their application of those skills was then assessed in the student teaching classrooms by university supervisors and school district personnel. Their overall performance was excellent.

The new courses were evaluated four ways. First, the course grades received by students in the project were compared with scores from the same classes in English. The grades were quite comparable, slightly exceeding the English average. Second, the students formally commented about the courses and rated all but one quite highly. Third, the instructors evaluated their experiences with project staff and an outside evaluator, and suggested changes that still needed to be made. Fourth, the course manuals were evaluated and edited by another outside evaluator.

In summary, the idea for the courses, in the context of the overall program, is quite viable and important for the institution. It was found that it was possible to develop regular courses in another language in an American university, with the proviso that sufficient students have to be recruited and prepared for such courses. The major problem, not recognized beforehand, is the fluidity of university personnel. A major suggestion would be that only tenured faculty be recruited, if feasible, to prevent loss of the personnel needed to teach such courses.